

Commune-level civil servants' work consciousness and service attitude in Vietnam

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Abstract

In each country, local civil servants play a very important role in the implementation of policies and political objectives of the state at the grassroots level. The performance of government agencies depends very much on the qualifications, working capacity, awareness and service attitude of the civil servants. In this study, the author focuses on analyzing the theoretical basis of work consciousness (WC), service attitude (SA) of commune-level civil servants - the lowest government agency in the three-level local government system of Vietnam; practical survey to identify the reality of service consciousness and attitude of commune-level civil servants in Vietnam. The study was carried out by qualitative method through collecting secondary data, combined with quantitative method through surveying opinions of 250 people in 5 provinces representing three regions of the country. . Research results have confirmed: Attitude to serve the people plays the most important role, has the strongest influence on the working consciousness of civil servants; Next is work consciousness. From the results of this study, the author has more scientific basis to suggest some contents that need to be researched and adjusted for managers to improve the quality of commune-level civil servants to meet the requirements of serving the people.

Keywords: Commune-level civil servants; Work consciousness; Service attitude; Vietnam.

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1. Introduction

Government agencies in Vietnam include the central government and local governments at three levels: provincial, district, and commune levels. Each level of local government has a People's Council, and a People's Committee is established through democratic elections: The electorate establishes a People's Council, then the People's Council establishes a People's Committee to directly perform the task of managing and administering economic and social activities of the locality.

Currently, Vietnam's local government consists of 63 provincial-level agencies; 705 district-level agencies and 10,604 commune-level agencies (GSO, 2022), which operate according to a strict hierarchy. At the commune level, the number of civil servants is generally regulated with 7 titles/commune (01 person/1 title). Some localities have complicated management areas, especially with separate regulations with a larger number of civil servants. The management of communal civil servants is carried out in accordance with the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants 2008 (VNA, 2008) and according to the general assessment, the commune-level civil servants are now standardized in terms of professional qualifications and training nurture, train to mature in practice. However, there is still a situation in which civil servants work with a sense and a bad service attitude, which has not yet created the satisfaction of the people in the locality, discussed in the Conference summarizing the Behavioral Reform Program of Government for the period 2011-2020 (TH Committee, 2021). This reality is posing challenges for managers in improving the quality of civil servants and the performance of local government agencies.

To help dec problem on, is very need to have the Research on content, survey on local work-related matters, including content on work and service regimes of commune level. With that in mind, the author conducts research, surveys, and evaluates people's knowledge about working consciousness and service regimes of commune-level companies to contribute to providing more scientific information for management activities dynamic logic. Model Size was determined to include 250 people in 5 provinces representing three regions of Vietnam, namely: Lang Son, Lao Cai (Norland), Quang Binh (Central Region), An Giang, and Ben Tre (Southward).

2. Research overview

The working consciousness and service attitude related to public service ethics of civil servants are confirmed by the law of Vietnam and many researchers. In the legal aspect, civil servants are defined as public servants of the people and have a sense and attitude of “devoted to serve the people” (VNA, 2008). In terms of research, in the process of performing their duties, civil servants must have a sense of work and responsibility for their assigned tasks in terms of both progress and quality, and at the same time, they must have the responsibility to serve and create people's satisfaction (Tung, L.S., 2021; Hai, N.H., 2014; Trung, N.S. et al., 2021).

a) Work Consciousness (WC)

- WC1. Comply with the provisions of law in the field of professional activities. This content not only ensures discipline in the performance of official duties, but also ensures that commune-level civil servants do not infringe upon the people's legitimate rights and interests when handling dossiers. Therefore, ward civil servants must comply with the law during the performance of their assigned professional tasks.
- WC2. Adhere to work procedures. This content is reflected in the fact that commune-level civil servants must comply with the order of implementation of the assigned tasks to ensure order and discipline while ensuring professionalism in performing professional tasks as well as governmental activities.
- WC3. Comply with regulations on working time. The commune-level government agency is characterized as an agency serving the people on a regular basis, so in addition to performance management, time management is still necessary to be strictly applied full. Therefore, commune-level civil servants must comply with the prescribed working time in order to continuously serve the people.
- WC4. Eager to learn, demanding at work. Social problems are constantly arising and complicated developments associated with the people's requirements for government agencies, so each public servant must have continuous self-study with a demanding attitude to answer the question. Only then can the people's affairs be solved in the best way.
- WC5. Ready to work. This content is reflected in the fact that commune-level civil servants, as public servants of the people, are willing to work, support and serve the people to solve their requests in the best way.

b) Service attitude the people (SA)

- SA1. Respect the people. Commune-level civil servants must put the people's interests first, devote themselves to serving the people, be ready to meet the people's lawful requirements, and guide the people in a dedicated and thoughtful manner.
- SA2. Listen to people's opinions. Commune-level civil servants need to know how to listen to opinions and reflections from the people in order to grasp the practical situation of people's thoughts, aspirations and voices with the government agencies, becoming a direct bridge between the two people link between the people and the Government.
- SA3. Polite in communication with people. Commune-level civil servants are those who often directly contact and deal with people's requests, so in the process of solving people's affairs, they must have a courteous attitude in communication, in accordance with each object of the people, in accordance with the concept and etiquette of contemporary society.
- SA4. Fairness in dealing with people's requests. The target audience of commune-level civil servants includes many different groups and classes at different levels of awareness and caste. Therefore, commune-level civil servants must have awareness and act of fair treatment for all service members in order to create satisfaction for all of them, avoiding unnecessary conflicts to ensure their satisfaction. protect the interests of both parties.
- SA5. Dedicated to serving the people. The State of Vietnam is constitutionally a state ruled by law, of the people, by the people, for the people; State power belongs to the people, so civil servants are responsible for serving the people wholeheartedly, putting the people's interests above personal interests.

Working consciousness and service attitude have been identified by many Vietnamese researchers and managers as two of the basic criteria to evaluate the results of public service performance of commune-level civil servants (CS). The results of official performance are reflected in a number of main contents, including: Ensuring the progress of the assigned work (CS1); Ensuring the quality of performance of assigned work (CS2); Creating satisfaction and trust of people (CS3) (Thu, T.T. et al., 2013; Trung, N.S. et al., 2020).

Table 1. Research scale on working consciousness, service attitude of commune-level civil servants

No	Scales	Encode	Rating levels				
			1	2	3	4	5
I	Working consciousness of commune-level civil servants	WC					
1	Comply with the provisions of law in the field of professional activities	WC1					
2	Adhere to work procedures	WC2					
3	Comply with regulations on working time	WC3					
4	Eager to learn, demanding at work	WC4					
5	Ready to work						
II	Service attitude of commune-level civil servants	SA					
1	Respect the people	SA1					
2	Listen to people's opinions	SA2					
3	Polite in communication with people	SA3					
4	Fairness in dealing with people's requests	SA4					
5	Dedicated to serving the people	SA5					
III	Results of public service performance of commune-level civil servants	CS					
1	Ensuring the progress of the assigned work	CS1					
2	Ensuring the quality of performance of assigned work	CS2					
3	Creating satisfaction and trust of people	CS3					

Source: The authors' synthesized results from the literature review.

From the research overview on working consciousness, service attitude of commune-level civil servants, the research scales were determined including: 02 independent variables with 10 observed variables and 01 dependent variables with 03 observed variables. The author designed a survey form consisting of 13 questions and 13 observed variables. All observed variables are measured using a 5-level Likert measure: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No comments; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree (Table 1). From here, the author builds a research model and research hypothesis, which are:

Research models

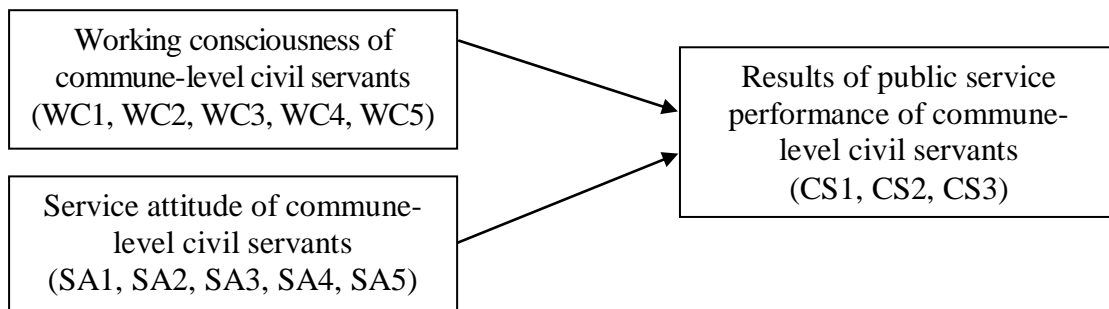


Figure 1. Research model

Research hypothesis

H1: Working consciousness correlates with the Results of public service performance of commune-level civil servants.

H2: Service attitude correlates with the Results of public service performance of commune-level civil servants.

3. Research Methods

The author uses a qualitative method (collection, analysis of secondary data - published documents) combined with quantitative methods (collection and analysis of primary data in the form of investigation and surveys). The investigation and survey are carried out in two steps: Preliminary investigation and official investigation.

a) Preliminary survey

The minimum sample size required for factor analysis for the 3-scale and 13-variable model of this study is $N = 13 \times 5 = 65$ (Hair, J.F. et al., 2009). The author carried out the survey with sample size $N = 250 > 65$ to ensure the reliability of data collection. The survey questionnaire was designed and completed, the author conducted a preliminary survey in Lang Son province with sample size $N = 100$ peoples. Preliminary survey results show that the observed variables are reliable so that they can be used in the official survey on a broader scale.

b) Official survey

The author conducted an official survey in 5 provinces representing 3 regions of Vietnam: Lang Son, Lao Cai (Northern), Quang Binh (Central), An Giang, and Ben Tre (Southern). The poll is performed carefully for only those who have transacted with the commune government at least 3 times in the previous 3 years interviewed.

The survey was carried out with the respondents' consent after the author's preliminary interview. According to the survey data, 250/250 people agreed to respond, with 250/250 valid answer sheets, resulting in a 100% valid response rate. The majority (80.4%) of survey respondents had more than 5 transactions with local government agencies in the previous 3 years, according to the study sample's characteristics (Table 2).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the study sample

			Frequency			
			3-5 times	6-10 times	> 10 times	Total
Gender	Nam	Count	33	85	34	152
		% Gender	21.7%	55.9%	22.4%	100.0%
	Nữ	Count	16	44	38	98
		% Gender	16.3%	44.9%	38.8%	100.0%
Total	Count	49	129	72	250	
	% Gender	19.6%	51.6%	28.8%	100.0%	

Source: Author's survey results.

With the collected data, the author conducts scale testing, exploratory factor analysis, and regression analysis to test the research hypothesis.

4. Research results

The author conducts scale testing to identify the reliability of the observed variables in the model. The test results show that all 13 observed variables have reliability when meeting the standard conditions: Cronbach's alpha > 0.6; Corrected Item-Total Correlation > 0.3 (Huy, L. V. et al., 2012) (Table 3).

Table 3. The results of scale testing

STT	Scales	Observed variables	Reliability coefficients (Cronbach' Alpha)	The correlation coefficient of the smallest total variable
1	Working consciousness of commune-level civil servants (WC)	WC1, WC2, WC3, WC4, WC5	.765	WC3 = .469
2	Service attitude of commune-level civil servants (SA)	SA1, SA2, SA3, SA4, SA5	.760	SA5 = .532
3	Results of public service performance of commune-level civil servants (CS)	CS1, CS2, CS3	.716	CS3 = .347

Source: Author's survey results.

With verification values that meet the standard, 13 observed variables in the model continue to be used to perform exploratory factor analysis. The author conducts exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation to preliminarily evaluate the unidimensionality, convergence value, discriminant value of the scales. The results of the analysis are shown in Tables 4 and 5 below.

Table 4. Total Variance Explained

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.803
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	df
	Sig.
	2943.206
	78
	.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	5.264	40.489	40.489	5.264	40.489	40.489	4.128	31.756	31.756
2	3.206	24.659	65.148	3.206	24.659	65.148	2.902	22.321	54.077
3	1.373	10.563	75.711	1.373	10.563	75.711	2.812	21.634	75.711
4	.915	7.036	82.747						
.....						
13	.056	.434	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Author's survey results.

Table 5. Rotated Component Matrix

	Rotated Component Matrix ^a		
	Component		
	1	2	3
WC5	.917		
WC1	.875		
WC2	.834		
WC3	.784		
WC4	.798		
SA2		.917	
SA3		.896	
SA4		.847	
SA1		.834	
SA5		.646	
CS1			.883
CS2			.831
CS3			.533

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
 Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
 a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Source: Author's survey results.

In quantitative research, exploratory factor analysis is performed in accordance with the data set through the following values: $0.5 \leq KMO \leq 1$; Bartlett's test has the Sig level of significance. < 0.05 ; Eigenvalue ≥ 1 ; Total Variance Explained $\geq 50\%$; Factor Loading ≥ 0.5 (Huy, L.V. et al., 2012).

The data in Table 4 and Table 5 show that:

- KMO value = 0.803 > 0.5 confirms that exploratory factor analysis is appropriate for the data set
- Bartlett test has the Sig level of significance. = 0.000 < 0.05 shows that the observed variables have a linear correlation with the representative factor
- Total Variance Explained with Cumulative % = 75.711% $> 50\%$ shows that 75.711% variation of representative factors is explained by observed variables
- All observed variables have Factor Loading > 0.5 show that the observed variables have good statistical significance.
- The observed variables extracted into 03 factors corresponding to 03 initial factors with Eigenvalues > 1 , show that the original research model was kept unchanged, including: 01 dependent variable (CS), 02 independent variables (WC, SA) with a total of 13 observed variables with good statistical significance, multivariable linear regression analysis can be performed to consider the relationship of independent variables (WC, SA) with the dependent variable (CS).

Table 6. Multivariable regression results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.619	.168		3.674	.000	1.000
	Working consciousness of commune-level civil servants (WC)	1.164	.051	.998	22.845	.014	1.000
	Service attitude of commune-level civil servants (SA)	.335	.045	.326	7.460	.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Results of public service performance of commune-level civil servants (CS)
 Adjusted R Square: 0.702
 Durbin-Watson: 2.145

Source: Author's survey results.

The data in Table 6 show that:

- Adjusted R Square = 0.702 confirms that the factors WC, SA explain 70.2% of variation of the CS factor in the research model. The built multivariate regression model is suitable for the data set
- The Variance Inflation Factors (VIF = 1,000 < 2) shows that the regression model does not have multicollinearity.
- Durbin-Watson = 2.145 ($1 < d < 3$) shows that the regression model does not have autocorrelation. The regression coefficients of 2 independent variables (WC, SA) are statistically significant (Sig. < 0.05) showing that the factors WC, SA are all correlated with CS.

- The unnormalized regression coefficients have positive values, so the factors in the research model have a positive relationship, the hypotheses H1, H2 are accepted.

On the basis of the general regression model $Y = B_0 + B_1 * X_1 + B_2 * X_2 + \dots + B_i * X_i$ (Hair, J.F. et al., 2009), the multivariate regression model of this study can be identified as following:

$$CS = 0.619 + 1.164 * WC + 0.335 * SA$$

Based on the normalized regression coefficient, it can be seen that the correlation of the independent variables and the dependent variables in order are: Service attitude of commune-level civil servants (SA) and Working consciousness of commune-level civil servants (WC).

5. Conclusion

From the above research results, it can be affirmed that: The attitude of serving the people of commune-level civil servants of commune-level civil servants is rated at a lower level than that of civil servants working consciousness commune level. It also means that commune-level civil servants need to improve their service attitude to better work results, create more satisfaction and trust from the people. From this conclusion, the author suggests a number of management innovation contents for local leaders, which are: (1) Regularly fostering and training the working sense and service attitude of the public position; (2) Regularly inspecting and evaluating internally in combination with external assessments (evaluating opinions of the people) on the working spirit and service attitude of civil servants to have full and multi-dimensional information about civil servants in the performance of their duties.

In the operation of commune-level government agencies, when the physical conditions and policies are good, but the working consciousness and service attitude of civil servants are not good, the operation of the government agencies cannot be effective. high fruit. When commune-level civil servants are regularly fostered and trained in their working sense and service attitude, people will feel respected, served wholeheartedly and trust the local government more. This is an important factor to help government agencies promote the power of the people in the management of local social development.

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